

Government moves to strengthen cybersecurity



Antigua and Barbuda Makes Bold Move to Strengthen National Cybersecurity



The government has officially launched the **Antigua and Barbuda Government Cyber Incident Response Team (AB govCIRT)**, establishing a dedicated national capability to strengthen the government's preparedness, detection and response to cybersecurity incidents.

The official launch exercise took place on last Friday at the Sir John E. St. Luce Conference Centre, bringing together representatives from the law enforcement agencies including the Antigua and Barbuda Defence Force, Royal Police Force of Antigua and Barbuda, ONDCP, officials from across other government agencies, to include the Budget Office, Ministry of Finance and Foreign Affairs, IT staff from the Airport Authority and the Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre, private-sector partners such as the internet service providers.

In his remarks to officially launching AB govCIRT, Minister for Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), Melford Nicholas, emphasized that cybersecurity can no longer be viewed as a secondary consideration, but must be treated as a fundamental reality of modern government.



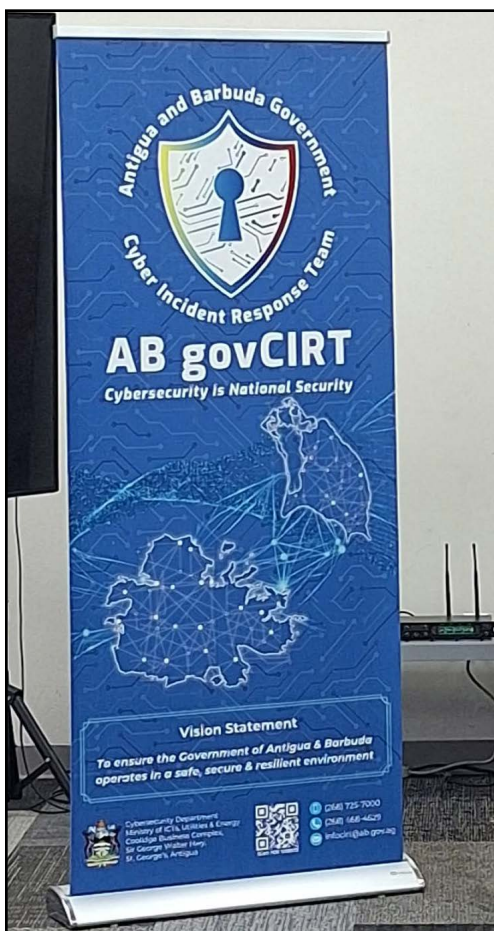
Minister Nicholas stated that cybersecurity is critical to improving the Government's ability to respond effectively to crises, strengthen resilience and protect the nation's digital infrastructure.

"Cybersecurity must be treated as a fundamental reality if we are to improve our response to crisis, become a more resilient government and build a more secure nation," Minister Nicholas said.

The launch marks an important step in the Government's ongoing efforts to build a more resilient digital environment and strengthen the protection of government information systems, services and critical digital assets.

Director of the Cybersecurity Department, Gordina Hector-Murrell, described the establishment of AB govCIRT as essential to strengthening cybersecurity across the Government.

"The CIRT is a must for security in



cyberspace,” Hector-Murrell stated, acknowledging that while the journey toward establishing the team has been a long one, the work now moves into a new phase with AB govCIRT serving as a central mechanism for strengthening government cybersecurity.

She explained that the team will provide greater visibility over the Government’s digital environment, including real-time monitoring and coordinated response to cybersecurity incidents, with the objective of ensuring that government assets are better protected.

AB govCIRT will operate under the leadership of Hector-Murrell and will serve as a focal point for the Government’s cybersecurity incident response efforts. The team will be responsible for coordinating responses to cybersecurity incidents, supporting monitoring and threat detection, strengthening cybersecurity awareness and training, and helping Government entities improve their overall cyber resilience.

The establishment of AB govCIRT



also reflects the importance of collaboration across Government and with national stakeholders. The participation of the Defence Force, Royal Police Force, ONDCP, Budget Office, private-sector partners and other Government officials demonstrates the shared responsibility required to protect Antigua and Barbuda’s digital

ecosystem.

As part of the ceremony, Minister Nicholas and Hector-Murrell unveiled the official AB govCIRT banner, formally marking the launch of the new cybersecurity capability. Minister Nicholas was also presented with a commemorative plaque displaying the official AB govCIRT logo.

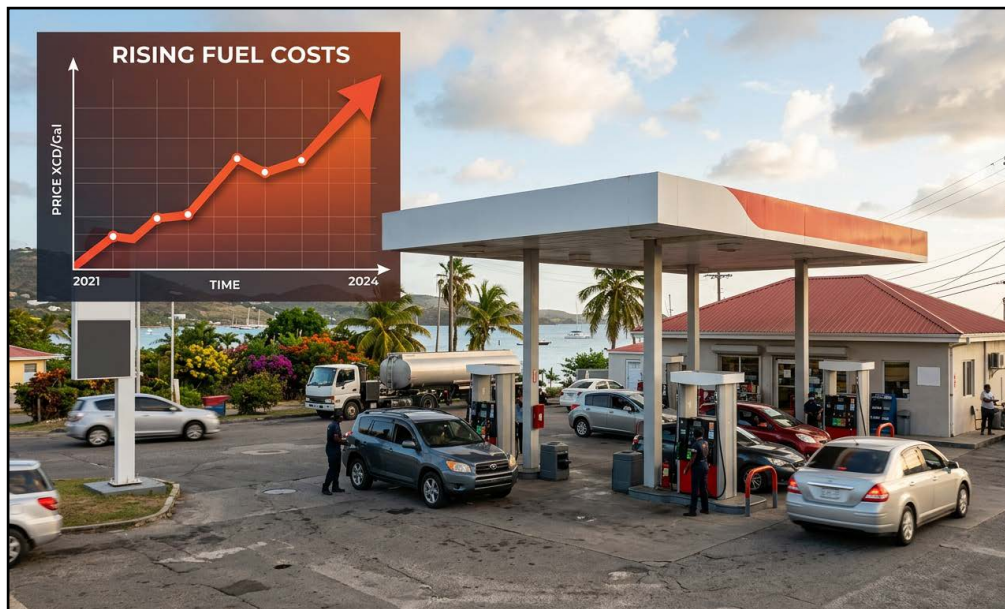
Trouble Ahead?

The government may soon have another major issue on hand to contend with as service station operators are said to be threatening mass closures as they demand a higher profit margin from the government.

That's what was reported late last night in a social media post by Prime Minister Gaston Browne.

In the post, PM Browne said he had just received a phone call which reported on the possible action by the service station operators. "I just received a call that gas station dealers are demanding an increase in their profit margin and threatening closure at a time when the government has eliminated its margin to keep prices down. Bad timing!!!" the prime minister wrote.

Point Broadcasting Network will update the public on this developing



story during the day on Tuesday, September 1.

Last Saturday, the prime minister an-

nounced that fuel prices will increase at the pumps and this increase is expected to go into effect this week.



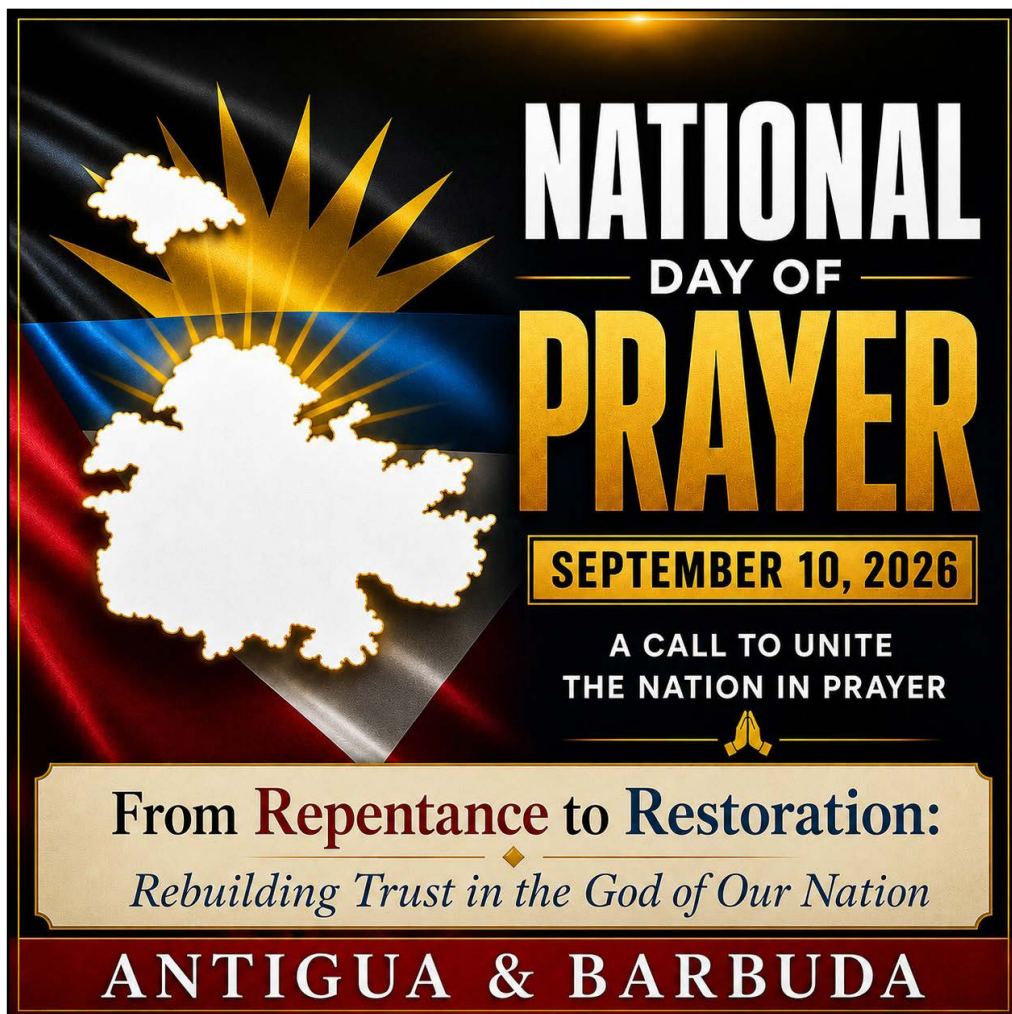
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September 10 Declared National Day of Prayer 2026



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SEPTEMBER 10, 2026

A CALL TO UNITE
THE NATION IN PRAYER

From Repentance to Restoration:
Rebuilding Trust in the God of Our Nation

ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

The Ecclesiastical Commission and the Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation, have designated Thursday September 10, as the National Day of Prayer, under the theme “From Repentance to Restoration: Rebuilding Trust

in the God of Our Nation”.

The observance will run from 6:00AM to 6:00PM. Churches across Antigua and Barbuda will open their doors throughout the morning and

early afternoon for prayer within their communities. Religious leaders of various denominations will then engage with the media to discuss the importance of prayer, hopefulness and giving thanks as the day culminates in a national gathering at the Antigua Recreation Ground from 4:00PM to 6:00PM.

The public is invited to join in prayer for mercy, for hope, and for thanksgiving and trust.

“At once per year, the Commission felt it was necessary to have a day where we can focus and look inward so that we can call out to God for His protection and direction,” said Dr. Emmanuel Elizée, Chairman of the Ecclesiastical Commission.

“Even in difficult times, this nation still has much to be grateful for. There’s a biblical precedent to bless all nations that remember God, and that the protector and provider of us all,” he added.

The Ecclesiastical Commission and the Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation encourage all citizens and residents to take part in the day’s events and join them at the Antigua Recreation Ground for the closing national gathering as the nation comes together in prayer, reflection, and thanksgiving.



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Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre Celebrates 2026 Medical Intern Class



Sir Lester Bird Medical Centre (SLBMC) celebrated the completion of its 2025–2026 Medical Internship Programme with a graduation ceremony held on Monday honouring the 2026 Medical Intern Class.

The rigorous, one-year clinical training experience provides newly qualified doctors with a strong foundation in clinical medicine. The programme prepares them for full licensure and independent general practice in Antigua and Barbuda.

Throughout the year, interns completed core rotations in:

- Internal Medicine
- General Surgery
- Obstetrics & Gynaecology
- Paediatrics

These rotations provided hands-on experience, helping interns develop the clinical knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to progress in their medical careers. Successful completion of the program is required for full registration as a medical practitioner in Antigua and Barbuda, marking a vital transition from medical school to inde-

pendent practice.

Special Recognition and Awards

The ceremony also highlighted individual excellence among the graduates, with Dr. Georgian Ajilloh capturing three major awards including Intern of the Year.

Intern Awards:

- **Intern of the Year:** Dr. Georgian Ajilloh (For excelling in all aspects of the program, embodying competence, compassion, and professionalism)
- **Clinical Excellence Award:** Dr. David Odulaja (For exceptional clinical knowledge, skill, and judgment)
- **Patient Care & Compassion**

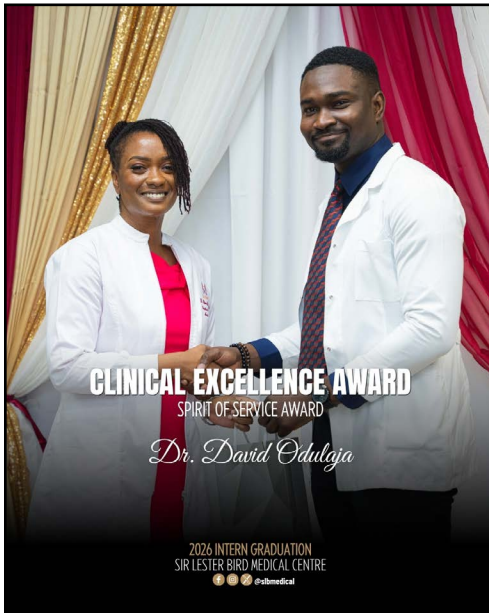


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Award: Dr. Georgian Ajilloh (For unwavering empathy, kindness, and dedication to holistic patient well-being)

► **Leadership & Team Spirit**

Award: Dr. Georgian Ajilloh (For exemplary leadership, collaboration, and inspiring colleagues)

► **Most Improved Intern:** Dr. Brianna Benjamin (For remarkable

growth in clinical skills, confidence, and professional maturity)

► **Spirit of Service Award:** Dr. David Odulaja (For outstanding dedication to serving patients, colleagues, and the community)

Faculty and Department Awards

The event also recognized outstanding faculty leadership, underscored by historic back-to-back achievements. For the second consecutive year, Dr. Vonetta George (SLBMC Dept. of Surgery Chair) received the Mentorship Award, and the Department of Pediatrics won the Outstanding Department Support award. Additionally, Dr. Gaden Osborne (SLBMC Neurologist and Subspecialties Chair) was honored with the Best Teaching Consultant Award for his dedication to medical education.



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NODS Reports Minor Damage From Remnants of Dolly

The National Office of Disaster Services (NODS) is reporting that it has received reports of minor damage following the weekend's winds and rains associated with the remnants of Dolly.

In a media release, the agency said there were a few downed electrical lines and trees which resulted in some roads being blocked and minor vehicular damage particularly in New Winthropes and Barnes Hill. No reports of flooding were received.

According to information from the Antigua and Barbuda Meteorological Service, up to 2.5 inches of rain fell between Saturday and Sunday. Additionally, NODS noted that there was a 30 percent chance of rain overnight and the possibility of more showers later this week.

Residents living in areas that are known to flood or can flood easily are encouraged to monitor these locations closely.

The agency is also reminding residents that this time of year is in the middle of the hurricane season and



they should continue to be in a state of readiness. Individuals should have emergency supplies on hand which include canned and other non-perishable foods, water for drinking and other purposes, radio, flashlight, lamp and other essential items. Ensure that homes are safe; reinforce windows and doors.

Residents should stay tuned to the local media for the latest updates on the weather, know the location of the nearest shelter and look out for vulnerable family members such as those who are physically and mentally challenged and the elderly.

The Atlantic hurricane season ends on November 30.

Midweek Deals

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Six Managers from Sandals Antigua Grande Complete High-Level Training



Six high-performing team members from Sandals Grande Antigua have successfully completed the prestigious Diploma in Hospitality Leadership Programme, marking another significant milestone in Sandals Resorts' commitment to developing and empowering Caribbean talent.

The programme, delivered through Sandals Corporate University (SCU) in partnership with Accelerating Leaders and Florida International University (FIU), provided the participants with an intensive 16-week leadership development experience designed to strengthen the skills and competencies required to excel in today's dynamic hospitality industry.

The graduating cohort comprises three managers and three supervisors from key operational areas across the resort operations: Ryan Casimir, information technology manager; Chrystel Baker, Red

Lane Spa manager; Dale Thomas, restaurant manager; RoseMarie Taylor, housekeeping supervisor; Odile Dangleben, stores supervisor; and Celia Harrigan, bar supervisor.

The six team members recently travelled to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to complete the programme's final phase—the capstone project—bringing together months of academic learning, practical leadership development and collaborative problem-solving.

Throughout the 16-week programme, the team was engaged in a comprehensive curriculum covering Business Analytics, Financial Management, Coaching and Mentoring, Influential Communications, and Leadership Strategies and Tactics.

The programme was designed to move beyond traditional class-

room learning, equipping participants with practical tools and strategic perspectives that can be applied directly to their roles and the wider hospitality environment.

Chrystel Baker, Red Lane Spa manager, shared that the experience provided an opportunity to examine leadership from a broader perspective and recognises the importance of continuous personal development. "This programme challenged me to look beyond the day-to-day responsibilities of managing a department and to really think about the kind of leader I want to become. I gained a deeper appreciation for strategic thinking, effective communication and the importance of developing the people around me. It has been an incredibly rewarding experience, and I am excited to take what I have learned back to my team and continue growing as a leader."

Nine Interns Complete Attachments Within MFAT&I



Nine interns have successfully completed the annual internship programme organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Immigration.

The young people spent the last six weeks attached to several of the departments within the ministry as the programme seeks to broaden their experiences and to provide a better understanding of the inner workings of this critical ministry.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Immigration, E.P Chet Greene used his

remarks to credit the achievements of two of the young men who participated in the programme noting that he is happy to see young men 'showing up' and making valuable contributions.

This, as he observed that young women and girls are outpacing young men and boys in every facet of national development and against this backdrop, there is a national obligation to recognize young men when they perform well at their various tasks.

"We have an obligation to ensure that when our young men step forward

they are recognized and given encouragement. We have Dr. Clarence Henry, our trade expert, who will be available to help you with your next step in the world of work. If it is that you want to go to UWI FIC or to study online, that too, can be accommodated as we encourage our young men to become more responsible and more involved in national life," he stated.

Addressing the young women, the minister explained that his remarks must not be seen as a diminution of their value, rather, it was a recognition



that they were so far ahead, that special efforts must be made to help close the gap between the genders.

“I don’t want to blunt your interest or your enthusiasm or to discourage you; rather I want to encourage you to stay in the lead because if you continue on that trajectory it won’t be long before one of you become the prime minister. Some may not want to hear this, but it is about performance,” he remarked.

The nine interns are; Shequanna Active, Lancia Lewis, J’Nae Charles, Delvisha Looby, Nicko Dew, Demario

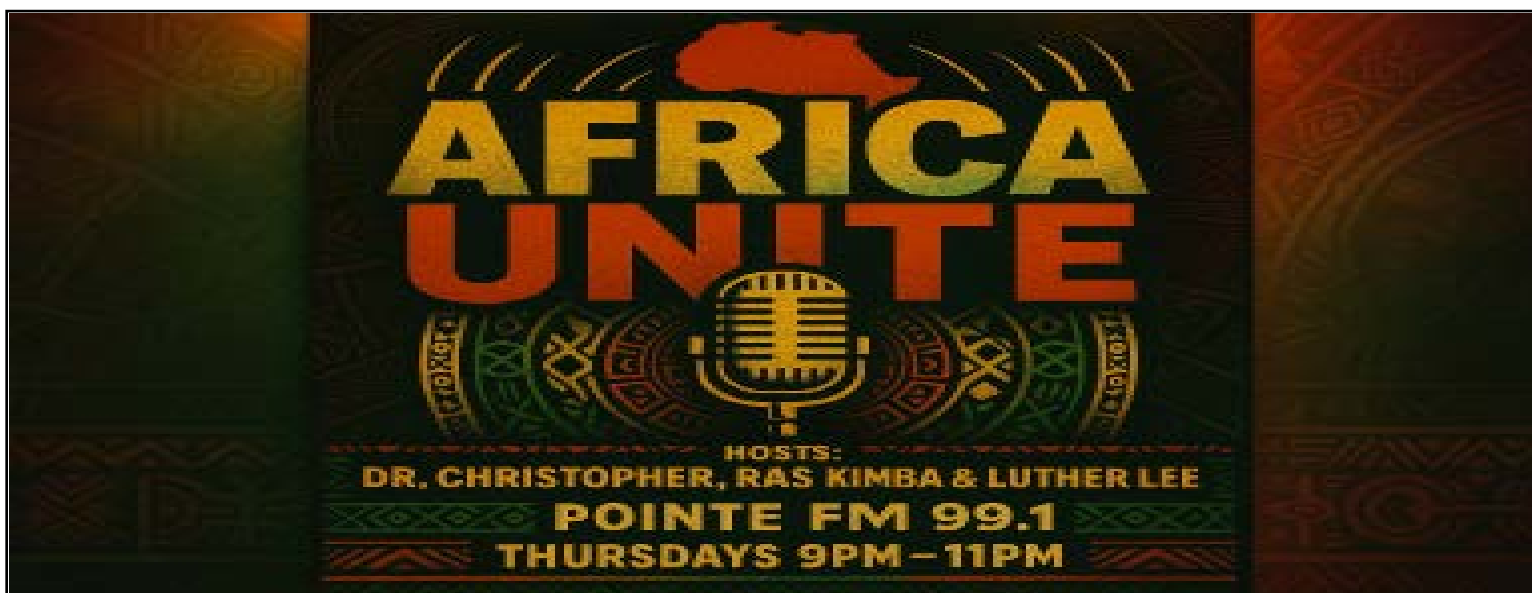
Charles, Oquan Cochrane, Aisha Cochrane and Soric Philip.

For Special mention; Delvisha Looby for Willingness and Professionalism, Shequanna Active for the Most Consistent Essay (female) and Soric Philip for Most Consistent Essay (male). Dedan Gardnier and Malik Scotland both of whom served as interns in the trade department were also mentioned for their group participation.

In her vote of thanks, Delvisha Looby thanked the ministry on behalf of the group for the opportunity to par-

ticipate in the work programme. “We were exposed to different departments within the ministry and each area provided us with a different perspective and allowed us to appreciate how the various departments work together to serve our country,” she noted.

Certificates and prizes were presented jointly by Minister Greene and Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sharon Stevens. Deputy P.S Karen Cabral chaired the brief ceremony which was also attended by heads of department within the ministry.



Heavy-duty Equipment Operators at PWD Take to The Streets, Again

The protracted issues involving heavy-duty operators employed by the Ministry of Works remain unresolved as the matter flared-up again on Monday with a protest outside the Office of the Prime Minister building.

Antigua Trades and Labour Union President, Bernard de Nully said there are several outstanding matters that need to be resolved if the dispute is to end shortly.

He identified these issues as;

- ▶ Failure to pay overtime that in some cases date back over 15 years.
- ▶ Failure to pay their rightful salary or wage for driving a bigger tonnage of trucks and heavy-duty machinery.
- ▶ Failure to pay the incentives that correspondence with their work environment.
- ▶ Failure to receive safety gear to perform their duties.
- ▶ The New Hires have not been furnished with a written statement detailing job terms, pay, and probation conditions which is legally requirement within 10 days of the start of employment. Some New Hires are constantly not being

paid while some Road Gangs workers are not paid every pay cycle.

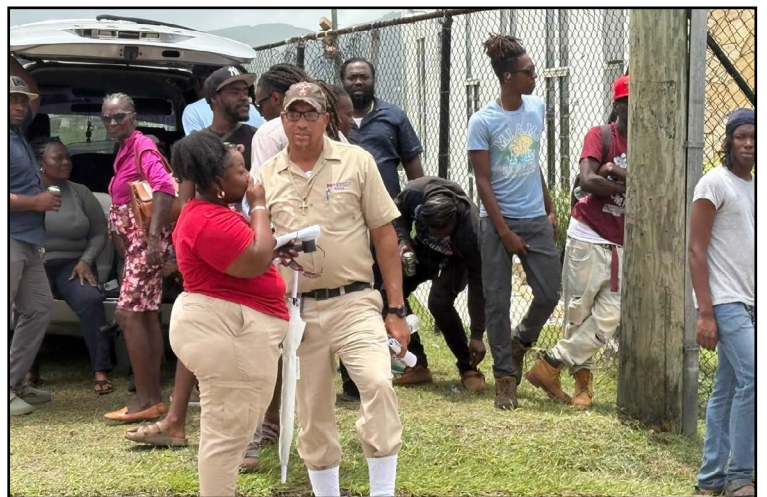
“The AT&LU stands in solidarity with all the workers of the Non-Establishment within the Public Works Department and will not allow all the grievances mentioned above to continue to be unresolved. Meaningful dialogue has been re-established Monday between the Prime Minister and Management in an aim to resolve all matters this week.

Over the weekend, the prime minister noted that although a subcommittee has been formed specifically to examine pay rates for heavy-duty machine operators in the Public Works Department, he is calling for fair consideration from those involved.

The special subcommittee comprises Minister of Housing and Works Maria Browne and her Junior Minister, Senator Shenella Govia; Attorney General Sir Steadroy Benjamin; and Minister of Social and Urban Transformation Rawdon Turner.

Their primary responsibility will be to assess current public-service rates against the prevailing wages being paid by private-sector employers for comparable heavy-duty equipment operations.

Prime Minister Gaston



Browne in a recent statement says the formation of the subcommittee comes as the current dispensation negotiated for heavy-duty equipment operators is unsustainable. He says the government is determined

to provide fair wages for all public servants, but cautions that any adjustment to wages must be considered against a backdrop of fiscal sustainability.



IN LOVING MEMORY

Garth Gomes
“Cody”

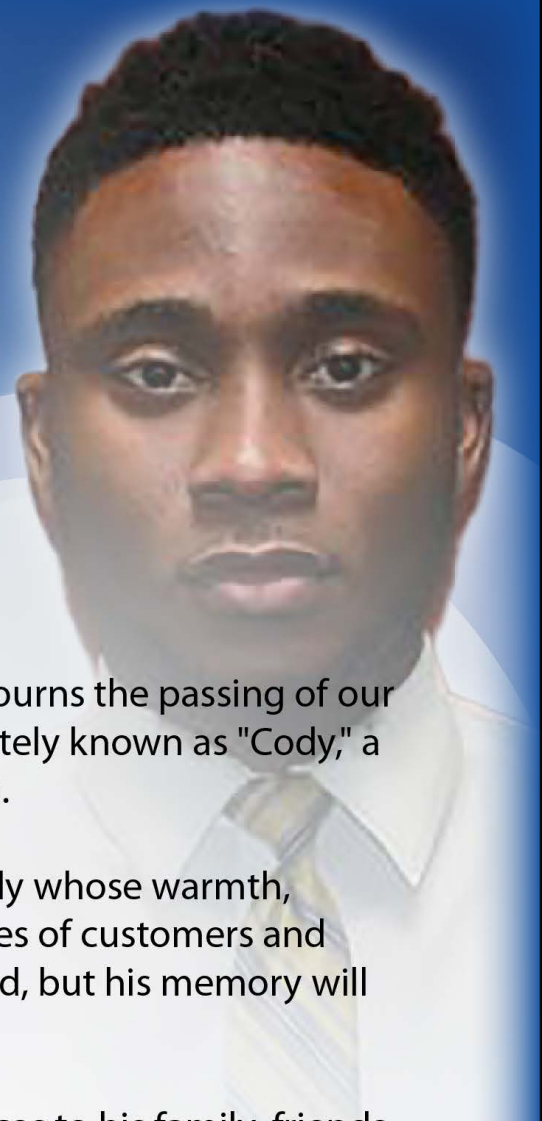
The **Eastern Caribbean Amalgamated Bank Ltd.** mourns the passing of our dear colleague and friend, Garth Gomes, affectionately known as "Cody," a Teller at our Coolidge Branch.

Garth was a valued member of the ECAB family whose warmth, professionalism, and dedication touched the lives of customers and colleagues alike. His presence will be deeply missed, but his memory will remain with us.

At this time of loss, we extend our sincere condolences to his family, friends, and loved ones. We keep them in our thoughts and prayers and hope they find strength and comfort in the cherished memories they shared with him.

Rest in Peace, Cody.

"Those we love don't go away; they walk beside us every day. Unseen, unheard, but always near."





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Improving Fee Payments at DCA

Open Letter to the Honourable Prime Minister,

I wish to make an open appeal for your assistance on what should be an easy fix to a very long standing problem. Before I move into the substantial matter I wish to have addressed, I need you to bear in mind two crucial points:

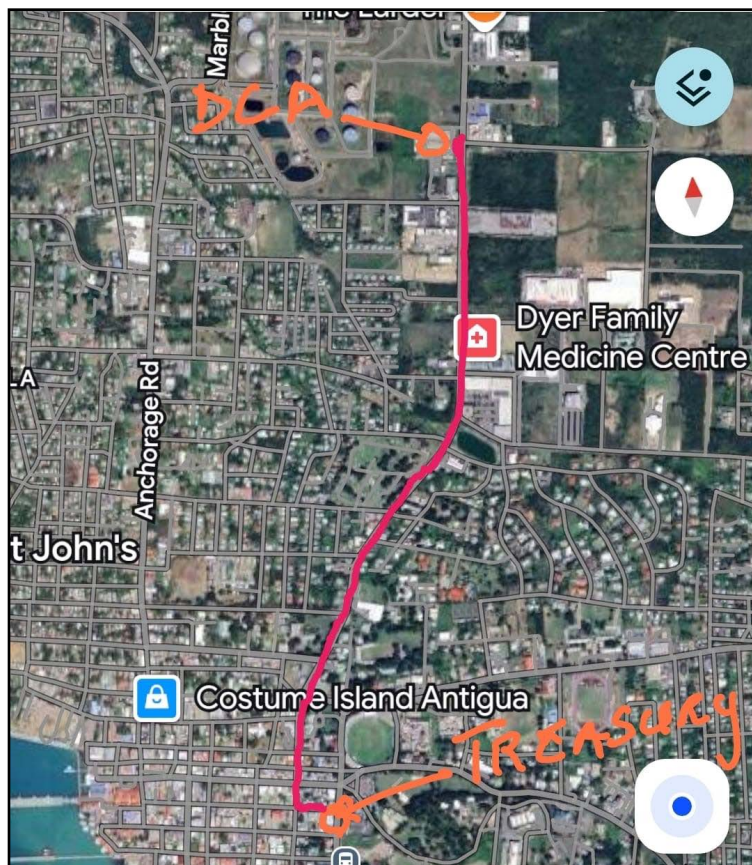
- The Development Control Authority on Friars Hill Road is approximately one and a half miles (1.5 miles) from the Treasury Building on St Mary's Street.

- There is a gentleman who, on the weekends, sets up his vendor station under a tent on Cedar Valley Road and sells laundry detergent. Customers can pay by card at the point of sale terminal on site.

Honourable Prime Minister, I am not sure if you are aware of the process of applying for and obtaining planning approval, but to ensure we are on the same page, a basic outline of the process is described below:

1. The project bundle with the application form is taken to the Treasury where an application fee of \$35.00 is paid.

2. The project bundle with application form and proof of payment are taken to DCA, (1.5 miles from the Treasury), and submitted there for review.



3. If the application is successful, the approval fee is calculated and a fee slip given to the applicant which must be presented at the Treasury for payment (1.5 miles from DCA).

4. The applicant returns to DCA (1.5 miles from the Treasury) and presents proof of payment in order to collect the approved project bundle.

I must note here, that depending on the project, the approval fee may vary from thirty dollars, to several tens of thousands of dollars; and in every case, individuals must travel four and a half miles to complete the process. That's 4.5 miles to pay for a process that may only

cost \$65.00. Let us juxtapose this with persons buying laundry detergent from a road side weekend vendor who have the convenience to pay by card.

It is ridiculous, that at this stage of our development, when we speak of improving "ease of doing business", "utilising technology" and "embracing a culture of excellence", that we are subjected to this archaic, inefficient and frustrating system. A system that:

- Unnecessarily costs the public time and money.
- Delays the government's revenue collection for services provided.
- Complicates a process that can be much simpler.

I do not understand why the public is not allowed to make payments onsite, at DCA, rather than traversing back and forth to the Treasury.

Sir, I urge you as Minister of Finance, and Prime Minister, to please intervene and do away with this laughable approach to revenue collection. The DCA plays an important part in the growth of our nation; and how it functions is a reflection on how we function. Its inability to progress and efficiently address the simple needs of the people it serves, is an indictment on our approach to development. Something needs to be done, we cannot be content to wallow in our own mediocrity. If security for cash is an issue, then allow payments at DCA by cheque or card, but please, do something.

I have in the past, raised the issue with several government officials to no avail. I hear of plans for an online portal and digital submissions, all great plans for the future; but we ignore the small improvements that can be made right now that will benefit the institution and the public it serves.

Let's take a page out of the book of that weekend vendor, who clearly wants the best for himself and the people he serves.

Respectfully yours
Ato D Kentish, LS

Who Pays at the Pump and Who Pays After the Storm?

Fuel subsidies, consumer behaviour and climate resilience in the Eastern Caribbean



By Professor C. Justin Robinson
*Pro Vice-Chancellor and Principal,
 The UWI Five Islands Campus*

A litre of gasoline has two prices, one is displayed on the pump and the other is hidden in the public accounts. When a government caps a price, trims a tax or compensates an importer, the cost does not disappear. It moves from the motorist's receipt to the taxpayer, the public enterprise, the debt or next year's budget.

This year has made the second price impossible to ignore. Since the United States and Israel went to war with Iran in late February, the Strait of Hormuz, carrier of 20% of the world's seaborne oil, has been all but shut. Brent broke US\$100 in March and still trades well above pre-war levels, in what the International Energy Agency calls the

largest supply disruption in the oil market's history. Every Eastern Caribbean government has spent 2026 deciding how much of that shock to pass to the pump and how much to absorb.

That is the useful way to read the region's price differences, not as a contest in kindness to motorists, but as a record of how each government divides the bill between the pump and the state.

The snapshot

The Eastern Caribbean Central Bank's July report puts the currency union's average gasoline price at EC\$17.66 per imperial gallon. Across the Eastern Caribbean prices range \$14.50 in Antigua and Barbuda to \$ 20.74 per gallon in Montserrat. St. Lucia reported a price of \$16.75, Grenada capped at \$17.00, SVG reported \$18.31 and Dominica \$19.03 per gallon. Barbados, with a price of EC \$24.01 per imperial gallon was well above an EC member nation.

Freight, margins and timing explain part of the gap while government support explains the rest. Antigua and Barbuda's low price has not made the cost vanish and by June the Government reportedly owed the West Indies Oil Company more than EC\$6 million. Grenada holds a EC\$17 ceiling, cutting the petrol tax as costs rise. Saint Lucia has been unusually transparent, reporting a gasoline subsidy of

EC\$1.14 per gallon in May alongside support for diesel, kerosene and cooking gas. Dominica cut fuel taxes by up to EC\$2 per gallon, warning of a revenue loss above half a million dollars a month. St Kitts and Nevis halved its gasoline excise until the end of July and St Vincent has used similar temporary cuts. Barbados is not a pure pass-through either as it has capped VAT, trimmed excise and cushioned electricity fuel costs.

The region sits on a spectrum from greater pass-through to greater public absorption and that makes Barbados neither virtuous nor its neighbours reckless. A high pump price is not, by itself, a climate policy because where alternatives are poor, it simply shifts the burden onto households.

What prices do to people

Pump prices shape behaviour, though not immediately. A nurse must still reach the hospital, a minibus operator cannot reorganized a livelihood overnight. Where buses are scarce, a higher price first cuts groceries or savings rather than driving. So temporary intervention can be justified such as in the case of a war-driven surge spreads through fares, food and electricity, and nearly every ECCU government reasonably moved to slow it this spring.

The trouble begins when support becomes broad and permanent, and a war with no settled end date is pre-



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cisely the shock that tempts governments to leave an emergency measure running. A low price on every gallon erodes the reward for an efficient vehicle, a shared journey or an electric motor, and drains the pressure to build alternatives. An emergency cushion is a shock absorber. A permanent subsidy becomes part of the architecture of dependence.

There is an equity problem too. A universal subsidy is paid per litre, not per unit of need so the household with several vehicles collects more than the one with a small car, and the citizen without a vehicle collects almost nothing. Abrupt removal is not the answer, poor households are still hurt through bus fares, food and cooking gas, but the lesson is to protect people directly rather than subsidize every litre.

The bill after the storm

Lower fossil-fuel use serves mitigation and the adaptation benefit of subsidy reform comes through fiscal space. Governments need money for drainage, coastal defences, water storage, resilient schools, stronger grids and disaster recovery. Money spent suppressing the price of imported fuel cannot also finance those investments.

This is not an argument that small islands should finance the climate crisis through hardship at the pump. They produce under one per cent of global emissions and major emitters owe them adaptation finance. But that finance is slow and uncertain, and a vulnerable state cannot surrender fiscal space indefinitely without asking what resilience it gives up in return.

The Iran war and the hurricane season are the same lesson from two directions. Both are shocks the region did not cause and cannot control, both land hardest on economies that import their fuel and food and both are answered from the same small Treasury. Open-ended fuel support creates a double vulnerability as it preserves dependence on the very oil a distant conflict has just interrupted, while weakening the fiscal capacity that must answer the next hurricane. Resil-

ience is not only sea walls and shelters. It is the ability to absorb a shock at the pump without surrendering the ability to absorb a shock from the sky.

Better design, not sudden abolition

First, transparency. Every fuel-price table should be paired with a fuel-support table showing landed cost, taxes, margins, direct payments, revenue forgone, subsidy per gallon. Without it, the cheapest pump price may simply be the least visible bill.

Second, discipline. Relief should be rules-based and capped, triggered at a price threshold, partial rather than total, expiring automatically. When prices fall, part of the revenue should replenish a stabilization reserve rather than vanish into general spending.

Third, targeting. Subsidizing a poor household's cooking gas is not the same as subsidising unlimited gasoline in a large private vehicle. Relief can

go to vulnerable households, public transport, farmers, fishers and essential services. Part of the savings should become a visible resilience dividend, electric buses, solar charging, stronger grids, flood-resistant roads, so citizens can see what the hidden money now builds. A price signal without a practical alternative is punishment but with dependable buses and reliable renewable power, it becomes policy.

Barbados should not boast that its motorists pay more, nor its neighbours that theirs pay less. The test is whether support is temporary, transparent, equitable and consistent with a credible path away from oil. A region that cannot influence what happens in the Gulf can still decide how exposed it chooses to remain.

The true price of cheap fuel is not always paid at the station. Sometimes it is paid after the storm.



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From Challenge to Opportunity — Mastering the Fundamentals of Great Customer Service



By Garfield Joseph

A Familiar Experience We All Understand

Across the world, in countries with advanced economies and emerging markets alike, people can recall moments when customer service didn't quite meet expectations. A call that was never returned, a promise to follow up that quietly faded, or an interaction where the attitude felt wearier than welcoming. These experiences are universal, appearing in businesses of every size and in institutions of every type, and they highlight a broader global challenge that organizations everywhere continue to navigate as they strive to deliver a consistently excellent customer experience.

They remind us of a simple truth: customer experience shapes how people feel about the places they visit, the businesses they support, and the services they rely on. It influences trust, loyalty, and reputation. It affects customers, employees, organizations, and even the way a nation is perceived.

Yet within this challenge lies a powerful opportunity.

Why Customer Service Sometimes Falls Short

In my work across hotels, franchising, private sector operations, public

service environments, and training companies throughout the Caribbean and the United States, I have seen a consistent pattern: most people genuinely want to deliver good service. They want customers to feel satisfied, respected, and valued. But wanting to do well is not the same as being equipped to do well.

Service often breaks down because employees are not always given clear expectations, practical training, the right tools, leadership support, constructive feedback, or recognition for good performance. Without these elements, even the most dedicated employee can struggle. With them, even an average performer can become exceptional.

Global research reinforces this reality. Studies show that nearly 80% of consumers will switch to a competitor after more than one poor service experience, demonstrating how fragile loyalty becomes when service fundamentals are weak. Conversely, when service is strong, customers respond with increased trust and longterm commitment.

This is why improving service is not about blame—it is about building systems that help people succeed.

A Turning Point in My Own Journey
My understanding of service excellence began early in my career, long before I became a hotel general manager. As a young assistant manager in the hospitality industry, I had the opportunity to work on a project with our UK headquarters leadership team and the Caribbean Hotel Association. Together, we helped write and codify performance standards across hotels the company owned in Antigua, St. Lucia, St. Kitts, Tobago, and even Kenya.

That experience taught me something profound: service excellence is not accidental. It is designed, documented, trained, and reinforced. When standards are clear, people rise to meet

them. When expectations are vague, service becomes inconsistent.

Years later, when I joined Yum! Brands, a multinational billiondollar organization with operations across the world, I saw the same principle at an even larger scale. Every service process, every standard, every expectation was already in place. It formed an integral part of onboarding and daily execution. Whether you worked in Kentucky, Kingston, or Kuala Lumpur, the customer experience was guided by the same disciplined approach.

This confirmed what I had learned in the Caribbean: great service is built on strong operating capabilities.

Building Strong Operating Foundations

Great customer experience begins long before a customer walks through the door. It starts with the quiet, behindthescenes structures that make excellence possible.

Organizations that consistently deliver great service—whether in hospitality, retail, finance, or public administration—rely on operations guides, training plans, and standard operating procedures. These tools are not meant to be tucked away in a binder. They are meant to guide daily behavior, shape expectations, and create consistency.

When people know what “good” looks like, they can deliver it. When they are unsure, service becomes unpredictable. This is the foundation of service quality.

Training: The Engine of Service Excellence

One of the most important lessons I have learned—whether in hotels, franchising, or government service—is that you cannot expect excellence from people who were never trained to deliver it.

Training is not a luxury. It is a necessity.

It teaches staff how to greet customers, how to communicate clearly, how to solve problems, and how to recover

when something goes wrong. It builds confidence and professionalism. It turns standards into habits.

And the data supports this: organizations that invest in structured training see customer satisfaction scores rise by 15% to 25%, and employees become significantly more consistent in delivering the expected experience.

When training is structured and ongoing, service becomes reliable. When training is absent, service becomes inconsistent.

Accountability and Recognition: Encouraging the Best in People

A strong service culture requires accountability—but accountability does not mean punishment. It means clarity. It means helping staff understand when they are meeting expectations and when improvement is needed.

When someone underperforms, they should receive feedback that is honest, respectful, and focused on growth. When someone excels, they should be recognized and rewarded. This balance creates a culture where people feel valued, motivated, and proud of their work.

Recognition is not just encouragement—it is strategy. Research shows that employees who feel appreciated are twice as likely to deliver exceptional service, and teams with strong recognition cultures have higher customer loyalty and retention.

People repeat what is celebrated.

Tools, Resources, and Leadership Support

Even the best training cannot over-

come a lack of tools. Employees need functioning equipment, updated technology, clear processes, and supportive supervisors. Leadership must model the standards they expect and provide the resources required to meet them.

Service excellence is not achieved through pressure—it is achieved through support.

A Universal Truth: The Customer Experience Defines the Product

In service industries, the customer experience is the product. A hotel room, a government permit, a restaurant meal, a bank transaction—these are judged not only by their functional outcome but by the experience surrounding them.

In nonservice industries, the physical product carries most of the value. But in service industries, the interaction carries almost all of it.

This is why strengthening service is essential for businesses, institutions, and national reputation.

A Story of Possibility: Excellence Already Exists

Across many countries, there are pockets of excellence—businesses, offices, and teams that deliver service with warmth, professionalism, and reliability. These examples prove that great service is achievable and sustainable.

The goal is not to criticize those who struggle, but to encourage more organizations to follow the examples of those who excel.

The Promise: What Happens When

We Get It Right

When organizations commit to strong operations, structured training, accountability, recognition, and leadership support, the transformation is remarkable.

Customers feel valued. Employees feel proud. Businesses grow. Institutions earn trust. Communities benefit. A nation's reputation strengthens.

And the numbers tell the story:

Customers who receive excellent service are 20% to 40% more likely to spend more on future purchases.

- ▶ A positive service interaction makes customers **five times more likely to recommend a business**, becoming ambassadors for the brand.
- ▶ Loyal customers are **up to seven times more likely to return**, even when competitors offer lower prices.
- ▶ Improving customer retention by just **5% can increase profits by 25% to 95%**, because loyal customers buy more often and cost less to serve.

These statistics highlight a powerful truth: **great service is not just a courtesy—it is a growth strategy.** It strengthens revenue, builds reputation, and creates longterm stability. When customers feel respected, supported, and valued, they repay that experience with loyalty, advocacy, and increased spending.

Great service is not just a business strategy—it is a national asset.



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Barima victims urged not to rush into compensation deals by Govt.



Families affected by the MV Barima disaster are being advised to seek independent legal advice before accepting any money being offered by the government.

Attorney Nigel Hughes, in a notification issued to victims and relatives, said people should be careful about signing documents connected to any payment.

His warning comes as the commission of inquiry into the 18th July disaster is yet to commence.

The MV Barima, which was operated by the Transport and Harbours Department, capsized and sank off the Essequibo, resulting in the deaths of some 100 passengers and injuries to others.

Barima victims urged not to rush into compensation deals by Govt.

The MV Barima which sank on July 18 last.

Hughes said victims who are in need of financial assistance can accept an

interim payment, but should first ensure that accepting the money does not affect their right to seek additional compensation later.

He particularly cautioned families about signing documents described as “full and final” settlements.

According to Hughes, such documents could prevent a victim or family from making another claim in the future, including if the inquiry uncovers information showing that the losses were greater than initially understood.

He is also advising victims to have an independent lawyer look over any document before signing it.

Hughes said any interim payment should be made “without prejudice” to the victim’s legal rights.

The commission of inquiry is examining several issues surrounding the disaster, including the condition of the vessel, whether it was overcrowded, how it was maintained and managed,

and whether safety equipment was available and properly used.

It is also expected to determine whether negligence, misconduct or failures within the system contributed to the tragedy.

Hughes pointed out that the government had made statements about the vessel’s condition shortly after the disaster, including claims that it was not overloaded and that its engines were functioning.

He said those statements were made before an independent investigation had established the facts.

Hughes is also urging victims and families to keep records of their expenses and losses, including medical bills, funeral costs and lost income.

He also encouraged them to follow the inquiry and seek legal representation before making decisions about compensation. (Kaieteur News)

Schools urged to brace for dry spell

School leaders are being urged to intensify water conservation and rainwater harvesting efforts as Jamaica enters the 2026-27 academic year amid continuing dry conditions and forecasts suggesting that the situation could worsen.

Senator Marlon Morgan, parliamentary secretary in the Ministry of Education, Skills, Youth and Information, made the call while addressing the ministry's Region Four Principals' Conference at the Montego Bay Convention Centre in St James.

Morgan said the prevailing dry spell, which he linked to the continuing El Niño effect, requires schools to take practical steps to conserve water and reduce their vulnerability to shortages.

"I must also make a point that, based on the El Niño effect that is persisting as we speak, the dry spell that is being encountered in many parts of the island, as school leaders focus attention, will have to be placed on the business of water conservation," he told principals last Thursday.

He specifically encouraged schools to make greater use of rainwater harvesting systems, particularly where buildings have zinc roofing.

"Ensure that, as far as possible, we are in the habit, at our respective school plants, of harvesting rainwater," Morgan said.

He suggested that schools install gutters on suitable roofs to channel rainwater into storage containers, including large tanks and drums.

"Wherever we have the zinc roofing, it's important that we have a kind of gutter affixed thereto, so that we can channel water into an appropriate receptacle, whether it is one of the black tanks or a blue drum, the 500-gallon blue drums, you name it," he said.

Morgan acknowledged that harvested rainwater would not necessarily be suitable for drinking, but said it



could play an important role in meeting non-potable needs around school compounds.

"It may not be potable water in some instances, but it would go a far way in helping us to do, and attend to, key things in and around the school plant," he said.

Among the uses he identified were flushing toilets and addressing other sanitary needs.

The parliamentary secretary also urged schools to ensure that water supplied through the National Water Commission (NWC) is used sparingly and responsibly.

"And where the water is in the pipe from the NWC primarily, ensure that your stakeholders use it in a conservative and responsible manner," Morgan instructed.

He said the need for conservation was particularly pressing, given the forecast for the coming weeks.

"That's going to be very important in the days and weeks ahead because, based on the forecast, it is not looking so good," Morgan warned.

However, he cautioned school leaders against becoming discouraged, urging

them instead to focus on measures within their control.

"At the same time, we cannot despair. We have to take an old-fashioned approach and just do the responsible thing because we cannot control certain things, but the things over which we have some superintendence and control, we have to ensure that those are on point," he said.

Morgan placed the water-conservation appeal within the wider push by the ministry for schools to become more resilient following the devastation caused by Hurricane Melissa.

He said schools, particularly across western Jamaica, had been forced to demonstrate resilience in the aftermath of the hurricane, with the ministry still repairing and reconstructing the school plant.

He argued that the rebuilding programme should ultimately leave schools with stronger and more resilient infrastructure.

For Morgan, rainwater harvesting should therefore become part of the culture of resilience being developed in schools.

"So, we are in a period where, as part of our culture of resilience, as we develop and consolidate that posture of resilience and exhibit innovativeness, we have to focus attention on the rainwater harvesting," he said.

His comments come as school administrators prepare for the reopening of schools on September 7, with the ministry expecting all schools to be operational, despite ongoing repairs at some institutions.

Morgan said the combination of water conservation, rainwater harvesting and responsible use of piped water would be critical to helping schools navigate the dry conditions while maintaining essential operations. (Jamaica Gleaner)

Australian firm begins maiden exploration at newly acquired gold project

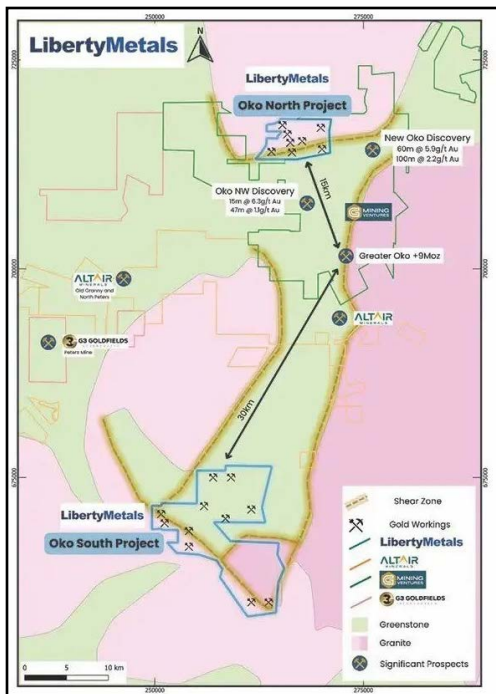
Australian company Liberty Metals Ltd has wasted no time in commencing its maiden exploration at its recently acquired gold projects located in one of Guyana's prominent mining districts.

The company has already disclosed that it is not targeting a small discovery but instead looking for a multi-million-ounce gold discovery. It was on 12th August, when Liberty announced that it had acquired a 90% interest in the Oko North and Oko South Gold Projects, a package of 40 granted medium-scale mining permits covering approximately 180 square kilometres (km²) in Guyana's Oko gold district, Region Seven (Cuyuni-Mazaruni) – an area where nine million ounces of gold have already been established by other foreign players.

According to Liberty Metals, field teams have already mobilised to conduct geological mapping, structural interpretation and surface sampling, with initial work focusing on numerous existing artisanal gold workings across the properties. A systematic soil geochemical programme involving approximately 5,000 samples is also expected to begin shortly.

The company also disclosed that local field crews have been engaged to support the exploration activities.

Liberty Metals has also contracted Portable PPB Pty Ltd to conduct in-field analysis of surface samples using its DetectORE™ portable XRF technology, which was developed by Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). The technology is expected to allow the company to receive results more rapidly and assess and prioritise potential drilling targets in real time. It was also disclosed that high-resolution satellite imagery is



also being acquired to map the extensive artisanal workings and better understand the geological and structural features across the project areas.

Liberty Metals Director and Non-Executive Chair, Nicholas Katris underscored that the company moved quickly to begin exploration following the acquisition.

“The recent acquisition of the Oko North and Oko South Projects has given Liberty a district-scale position in one of the most exciting gold camps in the world. The real work starts now. We have wasted no time getting boots on the ground and beginning systematic exploration of ground that hosts the same greenstone-belt rocks and structural corridor as the Oko discoveries, yet has never been tested with modern techniques,” he said.

Katris noted that its exploration programme is fully funded. “Our approach is disciplined and methodical: compiling data, acquiring high-resolution imagery, mapping the structural architecture and rolling out a maid-

en soil sampling programme that uses rapid, in-field portable XRF and DetectORE™ gold detection so we can define and prioritise drill targets quickly and efficiently. Our neighbours have shown exactly what early-stage geochemistry on this trend can convert into,” he added.

The Oko North and Oko South properties are located approximately 60 kilometres apart.

Liberty's entry was secured through an agreement with a private Guyanese vendor. Under the agreement, Liberty will have four years to exercise its option to acquire the 90% interest. The total consideration is approximately US\$8 million, excluding a separate milestone payment. It was explained that the milestone payment would become payable upon completion of a bankable feasibility study for the project.

Liberty Metals is now the second Australian firm to control a significant land package in the district. Altair Minerals in 2025 secured a 70% interest in the Greater Oko Gold Project, which spans 590 km² of contiguous mining lands in the area.

Besides Altair and Liberty, Canada-based G Mining Ventures Corp. (GMIN) also holds a major land package in the Oko district. Through its recent acquisition of fellow Canadian firm G2 Goldfields Inc., GMIN expanded its footprint in the Oko district to a contiguous land package of more than 362 km². The combination brings together GMIN's advanced Oko West Gold Project with G2's Oko-Ghanie Gold Projects, with a combined Measured and Indicated Mineral Resource of 7.0 million ounces and an Inferred Mineral Resource of 2.3 million ounces. (Kaieteur News)

Holness puts squatters on notice there'll be no 'chopping the line'



Prime Minister Dr Andrew Holness has indicated that he might have to use emergency powers to prevent people from moving onto lands at Coopers Pen, Trelawny, in an attempt to secure a place in the Government's planned relocation programme.

Holness, who toured the community on Friday and met with residents affected by the demolition of several homes on August 11, said reports of new people moving onto the lands to benefit from the Government's intervention could not be allowed to continue.

"It means that I may have to use emergency powers to address some of the situation," Holness said, referring to the possible use of a zone of special operations or a state of emergency.

He also made it clear that his Jamaica Labour Party administration does not support squatting and would not encourage people to illegally occupy land in the hope of eventually securing ownership.

"My administration, the Jamaica Labour Party, does not support the illegal and informal settlement of land. We

don't encourage it," Holness said. "We don't do that, and there is a reason for that."

According to Holness, informal occupation of land has contributed to generations of Jamaicans living without secure property rights, creating disputes that can eventually end up in court.

He said the Government's response to the Coopers Pen crisis must not send a message that squatting is a pathway to home ownership.

"So, whatever we are going to do in

response to this crisis must establish firmly in the minds of Jamaicans, and in government policy, that squatting is wrong," he said.

However, Holness stressed that opposition to squatting did not mean the Government would abandon people who had been living informally on the land.

"However, it must also establish that we must assist, help persons who are informally and irregularly settled on land," he said. "That is not because you are squatting, you are abandoned."

The prime minister said the Government was particularly concerned about reports that new people were moving into Coopers Pen in an attempt to become beneficiaries of the relocation programme.

"What has come to my attention is that there are persons moving into the area, displacing people who are here, on the basis that they are going to claim whatever solutions are going to be given to you," he said.

"In other words, there are those trying to displace you of your uncertain property rights. We are not going to allow that to happen," Holness insisted.

He also accused Opposition People's National Party politicians of encouraging people to illegally occupy the lands.

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“And what is worse is that there are politicians who have told people to do this,” Holness said. “The same politicians who told you to come and occupy the land are telling other people who were not on the land to come and occupy the land and displace you.”

Holness described the practice as “chopping the line” and warned that the Government would not allow people to manipulate the relocation process.

“Well, I am being clear: we will not allow anyone to chop any line in Jamaica,” he said. “We are not supporting the ‘chopping line’ culture. We are not supporting the scamming culture.

“That is what has destroyed Jamaica. That is what has made us poor, and that is what has gotten you into this position,” Holness told the residents.

To prevent any abuse of the relocation programme, the Government is conducting surveys to determine who are legitimate potential beneficiaries.

Holness said the Ministry of Housing had interviewed about 70 per cent of the people on the land, while the Social Development Commission was being brought in to assess households, families and vulnerable residents. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security is also conducting assessments.

The information from the three agencies will be combined to determine who qualifies for assistance.

“So, I want to make it clear that anybody [who] is trying to scam the system, it won’t work,” Holness said.

The Government has identified land near Coopers Pen and is considering another location in Trelawny if additional space is needed.

Holness said legitimate beneficiaries would receive surveyed lots in a planned subdivision equipped with roads, water and electricity, rather than simply being directed to occupy another piece of land.

The Government also plans to provide relocation grants to assist beneficiaries with rebuilding and replac-

ing damaged furniture and household items.

The lots could be made available through long-term leases, outright purchase and social housing arrange-

ments for people without income.

Holness said the ultimate objective is to move residents from informal occupation into legally recognised property ownership. (Jamaica Gleaner)



Congo authorities report more than 6,000 confirmed Ebola cases and nearly 3,000 deaths

Congo's authorities said on Monday that the fastest-growing Ebola outbreak in history has topped 6,000 cases with 2,911 deaths.

More than 1,360 people have recovered from the virus, in what authorities said was an "encouraging" development.

The outbreak in eastern Congo is spreading under extremely difficult conditions, fueled by insecurity, displacement, a health workers' strike and intense population movements. The situation is particularly concerning at displacement sites, where residents already live in extremely precarious conditions.

Last week, the virus spilled into two new health zones in the region.

The World Health Organization has said that it remains out of control and is on track to surpass the 2014-2016 West Africa Ebola outbreak, the deadliest on record, which killed more than 11,000 people, primarily in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

On Saturday, an Ebola response team was attacked on the outskirts of the town of Mambasa in Ituri province while responding to a call to secure a body. Young people armed with machetes stormed the site of the funeral, forcing the team to flee and injuring one member, a representative told The Associated Press.

"We demand greater security so we can operate in the field and do our work without endangering our lives," said Floribert Magene, a member of



the response team.

The outbreak is caused by the Bundibugyo virus, a rare type of Ebola that has no approved vaccine or treatment.

Last week, Congo began vaccinating health and other front-line workers with the Ervebo vaccine that was effective in past Ebola outbreaks caused by a different, more common type called Zaire.

Clinical trials are underway to find a licensed vaccine for the Bundibugyo virus.

Although the current outbreak was declared in mid-May, officials believe it had been spreading since February. It has spread from three health zones to nearly 60, with most cases and deaths occurring outside the network

of monitored contacts and within communities.

Efforts to bring the outbreak under control – from limited public gatherings to social distancing and airport closures – have disrupted life in the six provinces, particularly Ituri, which also has been ravaged by rebel violence.

The government has introduced some measures, including installing health and sanitary equipment at some locations, but advocacy groups say more needs to be done to build trust with the community.

While neighboring Uganda declared itself free of Ebola last month, the risk of further cross-border spread remains, the WHO said last week. (AP)



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Trump vows to hit back 'hard' after first exchange of fire with Iran in weeks



United States (US) President Donald Trump threatened to hit Iran “hard” after the two foes traded fire for the first time in over a month, while Iran’s president warned that more fighting with the US was not in his country’s interest.

After six months of war, the foes remain at an impasse, with Iran keeping the strategic Strait of Hormuz closed and the US persisting with a naval counter-blockade of Iran.

Late Sunday, the United States said it had carried out strikes on an Iranian island in the Strait of Hormuz, with Tehran quickly retaliating by attacking US military

targets in the Middle East.

The exchange raised fears of a return to major hostilities, with the US president vowing to respond.

“We’re going to hit them hard,” Trump said, according to a Fox News reporter who spoke to him briefly. “There will be a response.”

The United States said it attacked Iranian rocket launchers on the island of Larak to prevent Tehran planting mines in the key shipping lane.

Iran responded by with missile and drone attacks aimed at Jordan and the United Arab Emirates, saying they targeted US forces there, but President Masoud Pezeshkian

later on Monday called for dialogue.

“We continue to strive for a path of agreement and understanding, and we believe that continuing the war is neither in our interest, nor in the interest of the region,” he said at a summit in Kyrgyzstan, adding “the solution to the existing problems is dialogue and cooperation”.

State media reported that two people were killed in the US attack on Larak, with several others wounded.

Iran’s powerful Revolutionary Guards, the ideological arm of its military, said the ballistic missile attack on two US air bases in Jor-

dan caused “heavy damage”.

Jordan’s army said it had intercepted eight missiles, without stating their origin. Trump also told Fox that all the missiles fired at US forces had been shot down, except for one that was determined not to pose a threat.

Iran also said it targeted US personnel at an air base in the UAE and shot down an American drone over Hormuz.

Abu Dhabi said it intercepted a drone over the country’s waters, but dismissed claims that Al Minhad Air Base had been targeted as “baseless”.

The exchange of fire came after weeks of relative calm, with the Trump administration recently pivoting to “economic warfare”.

Earlier on Monday, Trump had called Iran “a Failed Nation”, saying on social media that its military was decimated, its finances were crumbling “and their leadership is in total disarray and incapable of properly representing the country”.

The two sides are still vying for control of the Strait of Hormuz, with Tehran having blocked the passage of commercial ships since the war began, attacking vessels that seek to cross.

One-fifth of the world’s oil passed through the strait before the war, which was triggered by a surprise wave of US and Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28.

Despite traffic remaining throttled six months on, Trump has claimed the US navy has “total control” of the strait and has even called it US territory, with Washington last week announcing it had complet-

ed clearing explosives from the waterway.

Iran, however, insists it is in charge of the sealane. The Revolutionary Guards said Monday a “rogue” oil tanker caught fire near the strait after it hit two mines while attempting to transit an “illegal route”.

The US military called the claim “disinformation”, saying: “No ships have hit mines in the Strait of Hormuz.”

Mediators have tried for months to broker an end to the war, but an earlier truce and memorandum of understanding fell apart.

Sporadic attacks resumed, but ultimately tapered off, with the US last striking Iran on July 29, after having attacked Iran for 13 consecutive nights earlier that month.

With diplomacy stalled, Iran’s foreign minister on Monday accused Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of tricking Washington into going to war.

“In Hebrew, Netanyahu openly crows that he suckered the US administration into a war on Iran on behalf of Israel,” Abbas Araghchi wrote on X. “In English, he praises POTUS’ leadership. Serpent.” (AFP)



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Shein valued at \$26.3 billion in Hong Kong market debut



Fast-fashion giant Shein raised \$1.7 billion in its long-awaited Hong Kong initial public offering, valuing the online retailer at around \$26.3 billion, the company said Monday.

Known for its ultra-low prices and rapidly produced clothes, the Chinese-founded behemoth's stock sale in the Asian financial hub comes after IPO plans for New York and London were derailed under regulatory scrutiny.

The online retailer offered 280 million shares on the market at HK\$48.56 apiece, Shein said in a filing to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange, below the maximum announced offer price of HK\$49.50.

The platform surged in popularity during the Covid-19 pandemic, conquering the global fast-fashion market by catering to young customers through social media.

But the company now faces slowing growth and increasing regulatory pres-

sure in Europe and the United States, its largest markets.

The \$26.3 billion valuation is well below the \$98.2 billion it commanded during private fundraising rounds in 2022.

Shein has faced scrutiny over its environmental footprint and allegations of human rights violations, and faces growing competition from Chinese low-cost retailers like Temu and Ali-Express.

Executive chairman Donald Tang told AFP last year that the company had "zero tolerance" for forced labour.

Its shares are to begin trading in Hong Kong on Tuesday.

Shein said it would use the funds to upgrade its technological capabilities and boost its international presence.

Founded in China and now headquartered in Singapore, Shein finally won Beijing's approval last month to make its initial public offering in Hong Kong.

Shein reported a full-year net profit of \$2.06 billion last year but recently swung to a \$99 million quarterly loss as the United States scrapped an import duty exemption on small packages.

In a similar move, the European Union last month imposed a duty of three euros (\$3.50) per item for packages valued at less than 150 euros.

"The decline in market perception of Shein reflects slower revenue growth amid a slew of geopolitical challenges as well as increased competition," Lorraine Tan, Morningstar's Asia director of equity research, said in a note.

"While sales in Asia are helping to offset a fall in US revenue, we're probably looking at a period of single-digit revenue growth for the company, and this maturing outlook is likely to limit investor excitement. On top of this, tariff and other geopolitical risks remain," she said. (AFP)



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Sports News

Antigua Falcons go top of CPL after rain washes out clash with Patriots



St. Kitts and Nevis Patriots captain Jason Holder, second from left, conducts the coin toss in the presence of Antigua and Barbuda Falcons captain Moeen Ali, second from right, and match referee Reon King, right, before their CPL match was abandoned due to rain at Warner Park in St. Kitts on Sunday, August 30, 2026. (CPLT20)

The Antigua and Barbuda Falcons earned one point and moved to the top of the Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League (CPL) after rain forced the abandonment of their match against the St. Kitts and Nevis Patriots at Warner Park in St. Kitts on Sunday.

The 21st Match of the Caribbean Premier League 2026 between the St. Kitts and Nevis Patriots and the Antigua and Barbuda Falcons ended in 'no result' after it was abandoned after the toss due to rain.

Both the teams claimed one point each, allowing the Antigua and Barbuda Falcons to advance to nine points from eight matches at the top of the seven-team CPL points table.

The Patriots, however, remain at the bottom of the points table with

three points from six matches.

The Patriots will return to action by hosting the Barbados Tridents at Warner Park on Tuesday night.

The Antigua and Barbuda Falcons will face defending champions the Trinbago Knight Riders in their penultimate round-robin match at the Queen's Park Oval in Trinidad on Wednesday, September 2.

Meanwhile, the Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League has recorded an increase in live stream viewership of more than 100 per cent for the 2026 season, a surge driven primarily by fans watching matches on YouTube and Facebook in India.

The growth reflects a rapidly expanding audience for the tournament, where fans have increasingly turned to CPL's live streams on

YouTube and Facebook to follow the action from the Caribbean.

The trend has been evident throughout the current season and marks a significant milestone in the league's ongoing digital expansion.

The Republic Bank CPL has built its reputation as one of the world's premier T20 leagues on the strength of its accessibility to fans, and this season's streaming numbers underline the tournament's growing global appeal.

The league's digital platforms remain central to bringing the thrilling, electrifying cricket of the Caribbean to audiences wherever they are in the world.

Pete Russell, Republic Bank CPL CEO, said, "To see live stream viewership more than double this season, with such strong growth coming from our fans in India, speaks to the growing global appeal of this tournament.

"The 'Biggest Party in Sport' is now reaching more fans than ever before, and we remain committed to bringing them closer to the action, wherever they are watching from. Our expectation is that this growth will continue over the coming weeks."

As the Republic Bank CPL continues through its 2026 season, the league remains focused on growing its global footprint and deepening its connection with cricket fans across the Caribbean and around the world, further cementing its status as one of the world's premier T20 leagues.

Falcons thank home fans as 2026 CPL campaign returns to the road

The Antigua and Barbuda Falcons have expressed their gratitude to supporters following a successful 2026 Republic Bank Caribbean Premier League (CPL) home leg at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua, as the team turn their attention to their final three round-robin matches on the road.

The Falcons completed their four-match home stand with three victories, defeating the St Kitts and Nevis Patriots, defending champions Trinbago Knight Riders, and Barbados Tridents, with their only home defeat coming against the Guyana Amazon Warriors.

Across the four matches, the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium became more than simply the Falcons' home venue. Supporters brought colour, noise, and energy to the stands, rallying behind the team through tight finishes and helping to create the home advantage the Falcons had hoped to establish.

The Antigua and Barbuda Falcons extend their gratitude to everyone who came through the gates, wore the colours, waved the flags, brought the energy and supported the team throughout the home leg.

The players and management have repeatedly acknowledged the impact of that support, particularly during the close encounters that characterised much of the Antigua and Barbuda Falcons' home matches.

Head Coach Paul Nixon said the three victories provided an important foundation as the Antigua and Barbuda Falcons move into the decisive road phase of the tournament.

"Looking back over our home leg, winning three of four games in a



Cricket Fans at a Caribbean Premier League match between the Antigua and Barbuda Falcons and Guyana Amazon Warriors at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua on Sunday, August 23, 2026.

challenging schedule was a fantastic team achievement. All our wins came in tight games, which gives us great belief in pressure situations," Nixon said.

Acknowledging the support at the franchise home base, the Sir Viv Richards Stadium, Nixon stated, "The way our home crowd got behind us really showed us how much they care and willed us over the line. Now we are on the road, we have to believe, plan well, be smart and super positive."

West Indies legend and Falcons team mentor Sir Curtly Ambrose is equally confident that the performances in Antigua can travel with the team.

"After a successful home leg, we are very confident that we can go on the road and do just as well," Ambrose said.

The first of the Antigua and Barbuda Falcons' remaining three

round-robin CPL matches ended in a no result against the St Kitts and Nevis Patriots after the match was abandoned due to rain at Warner Park in St Kitts on Sunday.

The Antigua and Barbuda Falcons will travel to Trinidad to face the Trinbago Knight Riders at the Queen's Park Oval on Wednesday, September 2.

The Antigua and Barbuda Falcons will face the Guyana Amazon Warriors in their final round-robin match at the National Stadium in Providence, Guyana, on Tuesday, September 8.

While the team will no longer have the physical presence of the home crowd around them, the Falcons are encouraging supporters across Antigua and Barbuda and throughout the diaspora to continue to follow and support the team's campaign in the 2026 CPL.

Pakistan summons home coaches and players after Test defeats in England



Pakistan's Mohammad Rizwan is out lbw on the bowling of England's Ollie Robinson, right, on day two of the second cricket test match between England and Pakistan in London, Friday, Aug. 28, 2026. (AP)

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Pakistan pushed the panic button after heavy defeats in the two cricket Tests in England by replacing seven players and two coaches on Monday.

Head coach Sarfaraz Ahmed and bowling coach Umar Gul were summoned home by the Pakistan Cricket Board to be replaced by white-ball head coach Mike Hesson and Ashley Noffke respectively for the third and final Test in Birmingham, starting on September 9.

Wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan, injured opening batter Imam-ul-Haq, first test captain Salman Ali Agha, spinner Ali Usman and pacer Khurram Shahzad — who all played in the second test defeat at Lord's on Sunday — were also returning home. Allrounder Aamir

Jamal and batter Awaiz Zafar were going with them without getting a game in England.

Imam's torn calf drew criticism in Pakistan media, especially from former chief selector Mohammad Wasim. Imam suffered the low grade injury in the field on the first day at Lord's and didn't play in the rest of the match.

However, after Wasim's criticism, Imam appeared in the outfield on Sunday before the fourth day's play but was visibly limping as he shadow-batted with his left calf heavily strapped.

Rizwan's overambitious shot selections against England, including his attempted slog against Ollie Robinson on Sunday that trapped him lbw, led to his axing.

Pakistan's dismal run in red-ball cricket continued during Ahmed's short tenure of around three months as the team lost five of its six away matches — two in Bangladesh, one in the West Indies and two in England.

Babar Azam's second stint as Test captain also couldn't turn around the test results after Pakistan sacked Shan Masood in May. Babar drew with the West Indies 1-1 but England has an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. Pakistan has lost 10 of its last 11 away Tests.

A finger injury ruled out Babar from the first test in Leeds and Agha led the side but he was dropped for the second Test.

Pakistan has yet to cross the 200-run mark in four innings of the series, losing by an innings and 103 runs in Leeds and by 194 run at Lord's.

The selectors recalled opening batter Saim Ayub, who has played eight Tests, and Abdullah Fazal, who was pulled out of the England tour when he was injured in the West Indies.

The five uncapped players traveling to England included spin allrounder Arafat Minhas, fast bowler Mohammad Imran Jr., wicketkeeper Saad Baig, and fast bowling allrounders Mohammad Imran and Razaullah.

Novak Djokovic loses in opening round of US Open for first time

NEW YORK (AP) — Novak Djokovic grinded through physical and internal ailments, made one mistake after another and could not find what it took to beat a feisty, younger opponent who was not intimidated under the lights against tennis' most decorated player.

The 39-year-old is out of the U.S. Open after a first-round defeat to Mariano Navone on Sunday night, losing 7-6 (5), 5-7, 4-6, 6-2, 6-1 in a five-set marathon that lasted four hours and 36 minutes.

It was the longest opening match of a Grand Slam in Djokovic's career and became his earliest exit in one in two decades, dating to the 2006 Australian Open. He had never lost in the first round at the US Open.

"I didn't enjoy myself," Djokovic said. "I think it was obvious that it was an awful feeling on the court for me."

The record holder with 24 major titles threw up at least once and later appeared to be cramping when he grabbed at his left foot. Djokovic swallowed pills brought to him by a doctor and had his lower back massaged during a medical timeout between the fourth and fifth sets, and he grimaced after several shots.

Djokovic made 70 unforced errors in a painful performance that ended mere minutes before midnight.

"It's something that I've been carrying, unfortunately, pretty much every match this year; vomiting, throwing up, a serious issue there," Djokovic said.

"Then my whole body starts to collapse, basically cramping and pain. Yeah, the back just gave up in the end and shoulder, and I couldn't close it out."



Novak Djokovic of Serbia gestures to the crowd after he lost to Mariano Navone of Argentina during the first round of the US Open tennis championships in New York Sunday, Aug. 30, 2026. (AP)

With this defeat, 21 years to the day of his US Open debut, the question now lingers as to whether this was Djokovic's final match at this or any Grand Slam. After the loss, he said he was "trying to address really what's going on and how far I can go this way."

With his wife, Jelena, watching from the stands with worried looks on her face, Djokovic had moments where he looked like one of the best to play the sport.

His fist pump was reserved after winning the second set, and he put his hand to his ear and gestured to the crowd for applause on the way to taking the third.

But Navone, a 25-year-old from Argentina who earlier this year won his first ATP singles title, did not go away.

Neither did the frustration of not being healthy or at his best. After firing a shot wide in the fourth set, Djokovic

landed awkwardly and dropped his racket.

Djokovic all but conceded the fourth set. But he was unable to muster enough for the what would have been his 43rd five-set victory as Navone picked up his first, calling it a dream come true.

"(It) was very tough for me because you are playing with the 'GOAT' on this court," said Navone, who idolized Djokovic growing up.

"For sure it's the best thing I've had on court. This is an amazing court and the biggest stage. It's amazing, the way we play. I mean, five sets. ... I'm very happy. I don't know. What can I say?"

It extended a nightmare stretch for Djokovic, who also lost in the first round at the hardcourt tuneup in Cincinnati earlier this month. That was his first action since losing to top-ranked Jannik Sinner in the semifinals at Wimbledon.

Garden Stars retain Parham Super League title



Garden Stars pose with their winning cheque after retaining their title in the Parham Super League at the Parham playing field on Sunday, August 30, 2026. (Photo courtesy of the PSL)

Garden Stars have retained their title in the Parham Super League, which is organized by Eastboy Promotions.

Garden stars made a successful defense of their title by winning the fourth edition of the Parham Super League with a 3-1 victory over the Freemans Village Scorpions at the Parham playing field on Sunday.

Most Valuable Player (MVP) of the final, Nadre Thomas scored twice in the second half, with goals in the 50th and 61st minutes, to secure victory for the Garden Stars.

Thomas's goals proved decisive after both teams reached halftime deadlocked at 1-1. N'gozie Harvey put Garden Stars ahead with a 10th-minute conversion, and Brandon Satchell converted a penalty kick in the 35th minute to equalize for the Freemans Village Scorpions.

Both teams booked their spots in the

final by snatching narrow wins in the semi-finals.

Garden Stars prevailed 5-4 in a penalty shootout against former back-to-back winners Pigotts Bullets. Goalkeeper Curtnie Roberts scored the fifth penalty kick to clinch victory for Garden Stars.

The game was forced to be decided via the penalty shootout after both teams battled to a 1-1 draw at the end of regulation.

The Freemans Village Scorpions recovered from squandering a two-goal lead to snatch a 3-2 victory and the Potters Tigers in the other semi-final.

It was also the first defeat for the Potters Tigers in the competition after winning all four previous matches in the round-robin group stage.

Ten (10) teams, divided into two groups of five, contested this year's

Parham Super League.

Similar to the third edition of the PSL in 2025, Garden Stars were presented with a grand prize of EC\$3,000 for winning the title.

The Freemans Village Scorpions received EC\$1,000 for finishing in the runners-up position.

Nadre Thomas of Garden Stars received a prize from J4 Heavy Duty Equipment Services for earning the MVP of the final award.

Thomas' teammate Michilo Reggis claimed the Best Defender of the Tournament Award and received a prize from 4K Sports Accessories Plus for his efforts.

Troy Jules of the Pigotts Bullets captured the Golden Boot (Most Goals) Award. Jules scored a total of 11 goals and received a prize compliments of LandTech Survey Services.